United Nations S/2013/408*

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 July 2013

Original: English

Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2061 (2012)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 2061 (2012), the Security Council requested me to report to it every four months on the progress made towards the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the third submitted pursuant to that resolution. It covers key political and security developments as well as regional and international events concerning Iraq and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since the issuance of my previous report, dated 12 March 2013 (S/2013/154).

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Internal developments

2. Rising inter-sectarian tensions are posing a major threat to stability and security in Iraq. During the reporting period, two main issues dominated internal political developments in the country: the continuing political crisis exacerbated by the widespread demonstrations in the predominantly Sunni governorates; and the governorate council elections, which were held on 20 April in 12 governorates and on 20 June in Anbar and Ninewa governorates.

3. The demonstrations have entered their seventh month without an immediate solution in sight. The demonstrators and their demands have been highly politicized by some Sunni political leaders and parties. Central to many of these demands are calls for the amendment of the Anti-Terrorism Law (No. 13 of 2005), the release of detainees held without charge or trial, the release of female detainees or their transfer to detention facilities in their home governorates, the amendment of the Accountability and Justice Law (No. 10 of 2008) and the enactment of a general amnesty law.

4. While the Government has been engaged in responding positively to several demands, the growing fragmentation within political coalitions, both close to and opposed to the Government, is contributing to the complexity and duration of the crisis. On 25 March, a cross-party committee headed by the former Prime Minister,

* Reissued for technical reasons on 15 July 2013.

13-38362* (E) 150713

Please recycle

Ibrahim Aleshaiker Al-Jaafari, agreed upon the replacement by a new law of two orders of the Governing Council (Nos. 76 and 88) concerning the property of former senior Baath Party members, in addition to the amendment of the Accountability and Justice Law. On 26 March, the Council of Ministers also gave its approval. Consequently, ministers from the Al-Iraqiya bloc, namely the Deputy Prime Minister, Saleh al-Mutlaq, the Minister of Education, Mohammed Tamim, the Minister of Industry, Ahmed Karbuli, and the Minister of Electricity, Kareem Abtan, officially ended their boycott of the meetings of the Council of Ministers. The Council of Representatives has, however, been paralyzed by repeated boycotts by most of the political blocs. Citing deadlock on the enactment of the bill on the criminalization of the Baath Party, the State of Law Coalition boycotted the sessions of the Council of Representatives in April and May and conditioned the enactment of that bill to its approval of the amendment of the Accountability and Justice Law. In addition, the interministerial committee in charge of the issue of detainees, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Energy Affairs, Hussain al-Shahristani, reported that, as at 16 June, the Government had released 6,909 detainees and dispersed funds of 208,938 frozen pensions. Of the 15,951 properties seized from former regime members, 13,240 had been released back to their owners. On 30 May, the Government launched an official website to receive demands from the demonstrators.

5. Coupled with the demonstrations, there was a spike in violence during the reporting period. During a rally following the Friday sermon on 19 April, a group of protesters clashed with Iraqi security forces in Hawija, Kirkuk Governorate, during which a member of the Iraqi security forces and a demonstrator were killed. Following the incident, a curfew was imposed in the district, the site cordoned off and the demonstrators ordered to hand over any seized weapons and the perpetrators of the attack. Negotiations between the demonstrators and a government delegation led by the Minister of Education proved unsuccessful. In the early hours of 23 April, the Iraqi security forces attempted to disperse the crowd and arrest the perpetrators. Consequently, 45 people were killed (44 civilians and 1 member of the Iraqi security forces) and 110 others wounded, according to UNAMI estimates. In protest, the Minister of Education immediately tendered his resignation, which was rejected by the Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki. Politicians from all blocs condemned the disproportionate use of force by Iraqi security forces and called for self-restraint.

6. On 23 April, a ministerial committee was formed by the Prime Minister to investigate the Hawija incident. The committee is headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Saleh al-Mutlaq. Other members include the Deputy Prime Minister, Hussain al-Shahristani, the acting Minister of Defence, Sadoun al-Dulaimi, the Minister of Human Rights, Mohammed al-Sudani, and the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Safa al-Din al-Safi. On 24 April, the committee issued an official apology to the victims of the incident, entitling them or their families to compensation, but has yet to announce the outcome of its investigation. A judicial committee was also formed to follow up on the incident and to substantiate the Government's assertion that its intervention and use of force were justified because the demonstrators were heavily armed. My Special Representative, Martin Kobler, raised the matter with the Prime Minister and indicated that the United Nations expected the Government to undertake a transparent and independent inquiry into the incident.

7. The Hawija incident also triggered a spillover effect in Salah al-Din, Ninewa, Diyala and Anbar governorates and dramatically increased tensions in the country, leading to a deteriorating security situation that resulted in some 170 deaths in three days following the incident. On 24 April, gunmen stormed the police headquarters in Suleiman-Bek (Salah al-Din Governorate). The Iraqi security forces deployed reinforcements and issued a 48-hour ultimatum for the armed elements to withdraw. The Governor of Salah al-Din successfully mediated a solution between the tribal leaders and the Iraqi security forces, leading to a peaceful restoration of control by the Iraqi security forces of Suleiman-Bek on 26 April. In addition, on 27 April, clashes broke out between the Iraqi security forces and gunmen near the Ramadi sit-in square (Anbar Governorate), killing five soldiers and wounding another. The leaders of the demonstrators blamed Al-Qaida and other militants for the deadly attack. The Iraqi security forces issued an ultimatum to the leaders of the demonstrators, demanding that the perpetrators be handed over. Negotiations were held between the two sides, mediated by a leading tribal sheikh and one of the main protest organizers in Anbar Governorate, Ahmed Abu Richa, and the Anbar Governorate Council. On 30 April, the Iraqi security forces were permitted to enter the demonstration areas to conduct searches and arrest the perpetrators.

8. Since the Hawija incident, several attempts have been made to mediate a peaceful settlement to the demonstrations. Owing to disagreements between the protesters over their representation in negotiations with the Government, a Sunni religious leader based in Amman, Sheikh Abdul Malik al-Saadi, indicated on 13 May that he would name members of a goodwill committee. He withdrew his initiative on 20 May, however, citing the Government's refusal to engage in dialogue and holding the Government responsible for the failure of the attempt. He vowed to continue peaceful demonstrations, while reserving the right to self-defence against any attack. While the core demands of the demonstrators remain focused on the release of prisoners and amendments, annulments and enactments of laws, the perceived limited response by the Government has hardened the stance of some demonstrators, who have also called, once again, for the formation of a Sunni region, the resignation of the Prime Minister and the abolition of the Constitution.

9. The continued presence of Iraqi security forces in and around protest squares is also contributing to the tensions and increasing the likelihood of violent clashes. Extremist elements have reportedly infiltrated some of the demonstrations. Several armed groups are particularly active in the areas in which the demonstrations are being held. They include various Sunni militia groups, the newly formed tribal Pride and Dignity Army (Jaysh al-Izza wal-Karamah), the Naqshbandia and Al-Qaida in Iraq/Islamic State of Iraq.

10. On 1 June, a symbolic meeting referred to as "Iraq first" was held, bringing together Iraqi political leaders as part of an initiative put forward by the head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Sayyed Ammar al-Hakim. Prominent politicians from various blocs, including the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives and all three Deputy Prime Ministers, met at the office of Mr. al-Hakim to discuss means to overcome their political differences, the demonstrations and the deterioration of the security situation in the country. Moqtada al-Sadr and Ayad Allawi were absent from the meeting, although the former sent a representative. The meeting came amid several dialogue initiatives, including one proposed by the Vice-President, Khudhair al-Khuzai. Further

consultations are expected to be held among political blocs with the aim of holding a national conference.

11. Civil society activists and several members of the Council of Representatives, notably women, continue to call for the inclusion of women in dialogue initiatives to address the crisis facing the country. Opposition from the political elite continues to hinder women from participating. Following the Hawija incident, mothers and wives of the victims protested against the killings and were supported by women civil society representatives, who held meetings with the Mayor of Hawija and tribal leaders during which they demanded justice for the affected families. My Special Representative has in all meetings been reiterating the need to consult and include women on the way forward out of the crisis.

12. Governorate council elections were conducted on 20 April in 12 of the country's governorates. Incidents of violence and intimidation of candidates, voters and electoral staff in the lead-up to the elections notwithstanding, the election day proceeded with few security incidents. The Independent High Electoral Commission released the final results on 1 June after the adjudication of all appeals. It declared that the average turnout in the 12 governorates had been 50 per cent. The turnout in Baghdad had been 33 per cent, the lowest of all the governorates, having fallen from 42 per cent in 2009. That lower turnout was influenced by security concerns and a vehicle curfew, which was lifted only after 3.30 p.m., two hours ahead of the closing of the polls. The Commission also recorded gender-disaggregated data indicating that 43 per cent of voters countrywide had been women.

13. Two key features in the governorate council elections stand out: a new seat allocation formula and the postponement of elections in Anbar and Ninewa governorates. The new seat allocation formula (Sainte-Laguë method) came as an amendment to the Governorate Elections Law (No. 36 of 2008) in December 2012. It removed the minimum threshold that was previously required for a candidate or coalition to gain a seat, paving the way for a greater number of small parties to gain representation on governorate councils. The three major electoral coalitions received a smaller share of total votes in 2013 than in 2009 (55 per cent and 65 per cent, respectively). Combined, other (smaller) lists gained more votes, winning 45 per cent of the total. The integrated United Nations electoral team drew the attention of the Commission to the consequences that the new seat allocation formula could have had for the number of elected women in the governorate councils and provided advice on ways to protect the advances made in women's political participation in Iraq since 2004. Consequently, the Commission adopted on 12 March a regulation to maintain the 25 per cent share of women's representation in governorate councils. Female candidates won 26 per cent of the 378 governorate council seats.

14. On 19 March, upon a recommendation of the High Electoral Security Committee citing security concerns, the Council of Ministers decided to postpone the elections in Anbar and Ninewa governorates for up to six months. Consequently, several political blocs initiated boycotts of the councils of ministers and representatives. On 20 May, the Council of Ministers approved the Commission's request to conduct elections in Anbar and Ninewa governorates on 20 June. Overall, the elections were conducted smoothly, with preliminary turnout figures of 50 per cent in Anbar and 38 per cent in Ninewa.

15. On 29 April, a delegation from the Kurdistan Regional Government headed by the Prime Minister, Nechirvan Barzani, visited Baghdad and met the Prime Minister

of Iraq to discuss the resolution of long-standing issues and increased cooperation between the two Governments. Consequently, they signed a seven-point agreement containing the following provisions: adoption of a law to compensate the victims of the Anfal campaign under the former regime; formation of a higher committee for security cooperation; formation of a joint committee to investigate joint security management in disputed areas; joint work to draft a law defining governorate administrative boundaries; formation of a joint committee to investigate issues relating to the judiciary, customs and immigration procedures concerning both Governments; reconsideration of the 2013 federal budget and its appendices by the Council of Representatives; and formation of a joint technical committee to discuss and agree upon hydrocarbon and revenue-sharing legislation. Consequently, Kurdish representatives and ministers ended their boycotts on 2 and 7 May, respectively.

16. On 9 June, the Prime Minister visited Erbil for the first time since his reappointment in December 2010. He chaired a regular session of the Council of Ministers. He also held side meetings with the President of the Kurdistan Region, Masoud Barzani, and senior officials of the Kurdistan Regional Government to activate the negotiation committees pursuant to the agreement of 29 April.

B. Regional and international developments

17. Much progress was achieved in the normalization of relations between Iraq and Kuwait. The fieldwork of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project was completed on 28 March when the Iraqi authorities removed the last obstacles encroaching on Kuwaiti territory. On 28 May, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Hoshyar Zebari, signed an agreement in Kuwait on the establishment of a bilateral technical commission responsible for arrangements for maintaining the physical representation of the boundary between the two countries. Consequently, as indicated in my letter dated 10 June to the President of the Security Council (S/2013/346), my responsibilities pursuant to Security Council resolution 833 (1993) have been discharged.

18. On 2 May, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq requested the transfer to the Government of Iraq of the funds set aside with the United Nations for the compensation of Iraqi private citizens whose assets remained on Kuwaiti territory following the demarcation of the international boundary between Iraq and Kuwait, pursuant to Security Council resolution 899 (1994). On 26 May, following the Council's concurrence (see S/2013/296), my Special Representative and the Minister for Foreign Affairs signed an agreement for that purpose. The funds were transferred to the Central Bank of Iraq on 20 June. Consequently, the Government of Iraq has assumed full responsibility for disbursing the compensation to eligible beneficiaries and agreed to inform me regarding the status and completion of the process. My responsibilities pursuant to Council resolution 899 (1994) have therefore been discharged.

19. On 12 June, the Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Mubarak Al Hamad Al Sabah, visited Baghdad as the head of a high-level delegation that met the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Usama al-Nujaifi, and other senior government officials. Both sides expressed their intention to usher in a new era of cooperation. Consequently, six memorandums of understanding and

agreements were signed in the areas of economic, cultural, educational, environmental and transport cooperation.

20. The continuing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to adversely affect the security and humanitarian situation in Iraq. On 8 April, the Islamic State of Iraq stated its allegiance to Al-Qaida in supporting the opposition in the Syrian Arab Republic. It remains unclear whether the group has actually merged with the Al-Nusra Front to form Al-Qaida in Iraq and the Levant. The Government of Iraq has reportedly increased security operations along the Syrian-Iraq border to prevent cross-border movements of armed groups. In response to international calls, it has also conducted random inspections for foreign overflights to ensure that its airspace is not used to deliver weapons into the Syrian Arab Republic.

21. In accordance with the ceasefire agreement of 21 March between the Kurdistan Workers Party and the Government of Turkey, members of the former began their withdrawal process from Turkey to Iraq on 8 May. The first group arrived in the Kurdistan Region on 14 May. In a statement of 9 May from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq and in letters dated 17 May to the United Nations and the League of Arab States, the Government of Iraq welcomed the peace initiative, but denounced the withdrawal into Iraqi territory. In response, in a letter to the Security Council on 3 June, the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations requested the Government of Iraq to ensure that the necessary means were put in place to put an end to any terrorist activities conducted by the Kurdistan Workers Party from Iraqi territory.

III. Update on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the United Nations country team

A. Political activities

22. During the reporting period, UNAMI sought to create space for political dialogue in order to ease sectarian tensions and expedite the legislative processes relating to the demonstrators' demands. In this regard, my Special Representative held regular meetings with key State officials, including the Prime Minister, the Vice-President, the Deputy Prime Ministers and the Speaker, to discuss the political crisis, including the demonstrations, the postponement of elections in Anbar and Ninewa governorates and the dramatic increase in sectarian tensions and violence. He expressed concern that the country would be heading down a precarious path should decisive and effective measures not be taken immediately. He has encouraged all Iraqi political, religious and tribal leaders to take bold initiatives and engage constructively in a broad-based national dialogue, in addition to stressing the importance of respecting human rights and the rule of law. In this regard, UNAMI continued to liaise with the focal point in the Office of Deputy Prime Minister al-Shahristani to assist in resolving human rights cases directly submitted to the Mission. UNAMI also interacted with a committee established by the Ministry of the Interior to obtain information on the detainees released.

23. My Special Representative travelled to Erbil on 26 March and again on 16 and 17 April to meet senior Kurdish officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister, Rowsch Nuri Shaways, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, to urge dialogue between Erbil and

Baghdad and to encourage the return of boycotting Kurdish ministers and representatives to the Cabinet and the Council of Representatives. My Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs, Electoral Assistance and Constitutional Support, György Busztin, also travelled to Erbil on 5 and 6 June, where he met the Speaker of the Parliament of the Kurdistan Region, Arsalan Baiz, and the head of the Politburo of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Kamal Kirkuki. In his consultations, he emphasized that UNAMI would continue to provide support in order to hold timely elections in the Kurdistan Region and encouraged the Kurdish leadership to lead the way in overcoming the political crisis.

24. On 16 April and 22 May, representatives of UNAMI visited Ramadi to meet the former Minister of Finance, Rafi al-Issawi, representatives of demonstrators from Anbar, Baghdad and Diyala governorates, tribal leaders, the Governor of Anbar, Qasim Fahdawi, and the Chair of the Anbar Governorate Council, Maamoun Alwani, in order to discuss ways to reduce tensions. On 11 April, my Special Representative held a meeting in Mosul with the Governor of Ninewa, Atheel Nujaifi. He travelled to Amman on 28 April, 7 May and 21 May to meet Sheikh Abdul Malik al-Saadi and representatives of the demonstrators to encourage talks with the Government and reiterate the Mission's readiness to mediate between the parties, as requested by the Government.

25. On 5 May, my Special Representative visited Kuwait and met senior government officials to discuss Iraq-Kuwait relations and outstanding obligations of Iraq under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations pertaining to Kuwait, including the establishment of a bilateral technical arrangement for boundary maintenance.

26. On 28 May, my Special Representative travelled to Brussels. He met the diplomatic community, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission and other European Union representatives, in addition to addressing the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. In his meetings, he provided an update on the political situation in Iraq and developments relating to camps New Iraq and Hurriya. He encouraged the States members of the European Union to follow the lead of Albania and Germany in welcoming residents of Camp Hurriya into their territories.

B. Electoral assistance

27. Under the leadership of UNAMI, the United Nations integrated electoral assistance team continued to provide support and technical advice to the Independent High Electoral Commission in organizing the governorate council elections on 20 April and 20 June. Those elections were the first to be supervised by the current Board of Commissioners. UNAMI has received positive feedback from observer organizations recognizing the successful implementation of technical and logistical arrangements and the professionalism of the Commission's polling and counting staff. On 20 April, the Commission was able to open all 32,500 polling stations. It accredited some 300,000 political entity agents, 77,000 domestic observers and 2,300 local media representatives. It also accredited 344 international observers and 187 international media representatives who were deployed in various governorates.

28. UNAMI continued to participate in the meetings and discussions of the Board of Commissioners, which showed its professional capability by taking decisions and approving measures necessary for the timely and successful conduct of the elections. On the basis of the Mission's recommendations, the Board adopted additional measures to detect and audit potential fraud cases. Triggers were established to conduct an audit of polling stations that reached a voter turnout of 85 per cent or higher, thereby reinstating the fraud detection levels previously used for the elections held in 2005.

29. Upon the Commission's request, the United Nations international electoral advisers served as members of committees established to handle election day complaints. For the elections of 20 April, 220 complaints relating to the voting process were received, a figure significantly lower than the 1,400 complaints received during the governorate council elections of 2009. UNAMI further extended legal advice in support to the Commission, ensuring the timely referral of appeal cases to the Electoral Judicial Panel.

30. The Commission has stepped up preparations for the parliamentary and presidential elections in the Kurdistan Region scheduled for 21 September, including the adoption of several regulations and procedures as well as logistical and technical preparations for the voter registration update and political entity certification.

C. Human rights developments and activities

31. The human rights situation in Iraq has been marked by an upsurge in violence and terrorist acts that have targeted mainly civilians and civilian infrastructure, resulting in high civilian casualties at levels not seen since 2008.

32. Violence against women, including honour-related crimes, continued to be reported. Of particular concern are claims documented by UNAMI that women who are the victims of trafficking and enforced prostitution continue to be punished by imprisonment, notwithstanding the provisions of the Anti-Trafficking Law (No. 111 of 2012) that are intended to protect them. The Family Protection Law, aimed at protecting victims of domestic violence, remains stalled in the Council of Representatives.

33. Grave violations against children continued to be documented. The country task force on monitoring and reporting, co-chaired by UNAMI and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICLF), received 177 reports of child casualties since my previous report, mostly resulting from armed violence and terrorist attacks. As at the end of June, 308 children, including 13 girls, were being held in detention facilities under article 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Law. The Government has yet to establish a formal mechanism for child protection and information-sharing with the country task force.

34. Restrictions on freedom of expression continued. On 29 April, the Communications and Media Commission announced the suspension of the broadcasting licences of 10 broadcasters, including al-Jazeera al-Sharqiyah, al-Sharqiyah News, Babylonian, Salah al-Din, Anwar 2, al-Tagheer, Fallujah and al-Gharbiyah, for breaching broadcasting guidelines because of alleged unprofessional broadcasting that led to an escalation in sectarian tensions. The

broadcasters denied the accusations. On 19 May, the Commission lifted the suspensions, provided that the broadcasters submitted evidence that they had taken action to rectify the breaches. On 1 May, UNAMI facilitated a round-table discussion on the role of the media in advancing women's rights in Iraq, with the participation of female journalists and representatives of the Independent High Electoral Commission, the High Commission for Human Rights and civil society organizations, to mark World Press Freedom Day.

35. Minorities in Iraq also continued to be targeted in acts of violence, including murder and kidnapping for ransom. In a particularly vicious attack on 16 May, a group of 10 Yezidi shopkeepers in Baghdad were gathered, collectively shot and their liquor stores burned. On 28 April, the leader of the black Iraqi community, Jalal Thiyab, was assassinated in Basra. He had worked tirelessly to promote and protect the rights of his community, which remains one of the poorest in Iraq. The repeated attacks on Turkmens and Christians are of particular concern.

36. Appeals for a moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions continue to go unheeded by the Government. Since my previous report, a further 60 persons have been executed after being convicted under article 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Law. On 16 April, 21 executions were carried out. On 19 April, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the continued use of the death penalty, stating that executing people in batches was obscene. She recalled that the Iraqi criminal justice system was not functioning adequately because forced confessions remained one of the main forms of evidence used by the judiciary to convict persons charged under the Anti-Terrorism Law. My Special Representative obtained assurances from the Deputy Minister of the Interior, Adnan al-Asadi, that UNAMI would be given access to the Ministry's facilities. UNAMI continued to receive reports from many detainees, prisoners and their family members alleging abuse, mistreatment and, at times, torture by the authorities during their detention in the Ministry's facilities at the hands of Iraqi security forces before being charged and transferred to facilities under the authority of the Ministry of Justice.

37. During the reporting period, UNAMI continued to monitor prisons and places of detention under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice throughout Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region. The continuing reform programme and reorganization of prisons continue to improve the physical condition and administration of many prisons and detention centres. Staff of the Ministry for Human Rights, human rights experts from non-governmental organizations and lawyers have reviewed the cases of prisoners and detainees and have investigated and documented claims of abuse, mistreatment or torture. Overcrowding remains an issue in some prisons, however, and inadequate health services are provided by the Ministry of Health in many detention centres. The Ministry of Justice has assured UNAMI of its determination to address the issues with other relevant ministries.

38. On 27 May, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of Education launched new education curricula for primary and secondary schools to raise awareness and understanding of the concepts of integrity, transparency, human rights and honesty. On 28 May, UNICEF and the University of Baghdad staged a conference on restorative justice, which produced a series of recommendations to activate a restorative justice system in Iraq that will help to resolve issues before they are filed in the Iraqi legal system, especially for children.

Camps New Iraq and Hurriya

39. On 15 June, an attack was launched on Camp Hurriya, killing 2 residents and injuring 13 others. My Deputy Special Representative visited the camp immediately after the attack and met representatives of the residents. He expressed grave concern about the attack and called upon the Government immediately to investigate and provide the necessary protection for the residents. As at 24 June, 591 small T-walls and 268 bunkers had been permitted into the camp. The residents' requests for large T-walls and personal helmets and vests have been denied by the Government, however, on the grounds that they are intended to be used by the residents for purposes other than protection.

40. Some 100 residents remain in Camp New Iraq. Notwithstanding the repeated calls by the Government for the residents to appoint Iraqi lawyers to represent them in disposing of the remaining property in the camp, and to relocate voluntarily to Camp Hurriya, the residents have refused to comply, insisting on United States counsel instead. On 14 May, the Government informed UNAMI of its firm intention to evict the remaining residents from the camp and to take it over using coercive measures, if necessary. The Government has indicated that it has obtained a court order to resolve all outstanding problems, including regarding property. The United Nations, including my Special Representative, continues to urge all parties to find a peaceful solution for the voluntary relocation of the remaining residents.

41. United Nations monitors in Camp Hurriya continue to be subjected to harassment and verbal abuse by some residents. Simultaneously, they were approached by a number of residents who claimed to be suffering restrictions and abuses of their human rights by the leadership of Mojahedin-e Khalq. The allegations include being prevented from leaving the camp voluntarily or from participating in the processes of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including being prevented from accepting offers of resettlement or relocation to third countries. Some residents also raised with monitors allegations of other restrictive and abusive practices imposed on them by the leadership of Mojahedin-e Khalq within the camp, including preventing their free movement within the camp, being forced to undertake self-criticism, preventing their contact with family members inside and outside the camp, prohibiting or restricting their free interaction with United Nations monitors and restricting or limiting their access to medical care or communication means. Residents who had managed to leave the camps confirmed many of the claims.

42. As at 21 June, UNHCR had completed the registration of 3,112 individuals and interviewed 2,033 persons in Camp Hurriya. A total of 1,604 individuals had been determined to have international protection needs, while the cases of the other interviewed individuals were being processed. To date, 97 residents have left Iraq. UNAMI and UNHCR continue to seek durable solutions for individuals with identified international protection needs through resettlement, consular and humanitarian channels. Four groups of Camp Hurriya residents, 71 in total, have been permanently relocated to Albania, as part of the Government's offer to accept 210 residents. On 15 April, Germany announced its willingness to accept some 100 residents from the camp who are able to claim asylum or refugee status in Germany.

D. Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development

43. As at 12 June, 159,196 Syrian refugees had been registered in Iraq, including 153,101 in the Kurdistan Region, 5,570 in Anbar Governorate and 525 elsewhere. The fifth Syria Regional Response Plan, launched on 13 June in Iraq, indicated that the number of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic could potentially reach 350,000 by the end of 2013: 300,000 in the Kurdistan Region, 30,000 in Al-Qaim (Anbar Governorate) and 20,000 elsewhere. It foresees that 40 per cent of the refugees will reside in camps, while the remainder will be hosted in local communities and settle in an urban environment. It also indicates that $350 million will be required to ensure the provision of lifesaving humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in Iraq.

44. Notwithstanding the closure of the Peshkapor border crossing in the Kurdistan Region on 19 May, through which more than 95 per cent of Syrian refugees had entered Iraq, the number of refugees entering the Kurdistan Region has averaged between 500 and 700 per day, leading to congestion and overcrowding in the Domiz camp, which is now home to some 40,000 refugees — yet with an original capacity of 15,000. In response to calls from UNHCR and other humanitarian actors, the Kurdistan Regional Government has agreed to allocate land to decongest the camp and to accommodate those Syrian refugees currently in urban areas who are unable to sustain themselves. Accordingly, plots have been allocated for the establishment of two additional camps in Erbil and in Sulaymaniyah. This will only partially bridge prevailing needs, however, and more land will be needed to house additional camps in the Kurdistan Region.

45. UNHCR continues to coordinate the humanitarian response to the Syrian refugee situation in Iraq in collaboration with the Ministry of Migration and Displacement, the Kurdistan Regional Government, United Nations humanitarian agencies, funds and programmes, including UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization and the International Organization for Migration, and other governmental and non-governmental humanitarian actors.

46. On 27 May, the Partnership Committee in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister endorsed 28 projects and distributed to line ministries the delayed 2012 allocation of $30 million, together with an additional $10 million, to co-finance United Nations projects and programmes. During the reporting period, the United Nations country team worked closely with the Kurdistan Regional Government to establish a tailored fund mechanism for the United Nations to respond to local needs.

47. On 12 May, UNDP, on behalf of the United Nations country team, convened a national validation workshop in Baghdad on the post-2015 development agenda in Iraq, which gathered the views of civil society, academics, women, young people and persons with disabilities on development targets to come after the Millennium Development Goals.

48. On 8 April, the Local Area Development Programme, a United Nations country team joint programme, was launched in the Kurdistan Region to facilitate increased access to high-quality essential services. During the reporting period, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization continued to support sustainable industrial development in Iraq, in particular the development of industrial zones. It mapped existing industrial zones in four governorates and

collected related information pertaining to current zone management practices. In addition, it conducted a comprehensive review of Iraqi legislation governing the development and administration of industrial zones and submitted it to the Government for endorsement on 25 April.

49. On 10 and 11 June, WFP convened a two-day workshop with the High Committee for the Reform of the Public Distribution System to discuss the potential introduction of electronic food vouchers in the public distribution system. They were joined by financial payment experts from an international financial services company to strengthen the delivery of digital food in the form of vouchers. The workshop was followed by a consultative meeting on 12 June chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Chair of the High Commission for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Rosch Nuri Shaways. WFP provided technical assistance to strengthen the national school-feeding programme by supporting the Deputy Minister of Planning of the Kurdistan Regional Government and representatives of the ministries of education of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq to participate in the fifteenth Global Child Nutrition Forum, held in Brazil from 20 to 24 May.

50. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, launched a child education initiative in Baghdad on 22 April and in Erbil on 19 May, aimed at enrolling children currently not attending educational institutions in common primary schools. The pilot phase of the project will be initiated in Erbil, Baghdad, Ninewa and Basra governorates, with an estimated 348,000 children to be enrolled in schools by 30 June 2014.

51. Encouraging progress has been achieved in regional efforts to combat the problem of sandstorms and dust storms. Land degradation along the Euphrates and Tigris basin and in abandoned agricultural areas has been identified as one of the main source areas of the storms, which wreak havoc on regional economies and local livelihoods. The joint assessment of trends, sources and intensity of sandstorms and dust storms carried out by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, issued on 26 May, was the first regional-level overview of the increase in intensity and frequency of regional sandstorms and dust storms. On 26 March, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations extended its project on the development of a national framework for integrated drought risk management until December 2013. During the reporting period, the project provided national partners with education and training regarding the causes and trends of sandstorms and dust storms affecting Iraq, developed a national programme to monitor, combat and mitigate such storms and established agricultural data information centres in Anbar, Basra and Erbil governorates to collect essential data as a means of stimulating agricultural investment and supporting the private sector.

52. On 21 April, the United Nations Office for Project Services launched a compact on partnership and development between the Parliament of the Kurdistan Region, the Kurdistan Regional Government and non-governmental organizations in the Kurdistan Region. The compact, the result of a year-long series of discussions and consultations, is the first of its kind in the Middle East. It will institutionalize the relationship between the authorities and non-governmental organizations and outline the values and principles governing their relationship, in addition to the

mutual responsibilities of the parties. On 28 April, UNDP and the Office organized a grant-signing ceremony hosted by the Council of Representatives to launch grants for 31 civil society organizations for projects reinforcing oversight mechanisms relating to human and civil rights, anti-corruption and the promotion of adequate service delivery.

53. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime delivered two projects, one to strengthen the management and operation of prisons administered by the Correctional Service and the other to strengthen the capacity of the Government to prevent corruption through targeted responses identified in the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, to which Iraq became a signatory in 2008.

IV. Security and operational issues

54. During the reporting period, the security environment in Iraq remained volatile. In April, 712 Iraqis were killed and 1,633 wounded, while 1,045 were killed and 2,397 wounded in May, the highest casualty figures since March 2008. The risk of increased sectarian violence is high, exacerbated by the presence of myriad armed opposition groups. Some have been operating in Iraq for a long time, such as Al-Qaida in Iraq and the Islamic State of Iraq. There are, however, also newly created or reactivated groups, including militias in the Sunni-dominated governorates and groups such as Asaib Ahl al-Haq and Kata'ib Hizbullah on the Shia side. Sunni armed opposition groups have demonstrated their capability to adapt their tactics and techniques to sustain a constant stream of attacks at a high operational tempo, maintaining constant pressure on the Iraqi security forces, testing their capabilities and rending difficult the conduct of counter-insurgency operations. In this context, the United Nations offices in Iraq remain exposed to intermittent indirect fire attacks. On 26 April and 27 May, two attacks affected a Guard Unit accommodation block and support facilities of the United Nations compound in Kirkuk.

55. Notwithstanding the Organization's best efforts and my personal intercession with the Prime Minister, it has still not proved possible to conclude and bring into force a status-of-mission agreement for UNAMI, nine years after the Mission was first established. My Special Representative continues to actively pursue this issue with the Government in order to establish an appropriate legal regime for the Mission, in accordance with the standards of the United Nations. The absence of such an agreement between UNAMI and the Government continues to negatively affect the effectiveness of the Mission. UNAMI faces regular obstacles and undue delays in the import and export of equipment and the issuance of visas to civilian and uniformed personnel. These challenges particularly affect the ability of the Mission to mobilize, rotate and equip the Guard Unit in keeping with the Mission's agreement with troop-contributing countries. The lack of associated privileges and immunities for personnel also places staff at risk in case of incident. This is of particular concern for security personnel, who lack the appropriate immunities and are thus not protected should incidents occur while on official duty. Customs clearance of the United Nations material is also a lengthy process, impeding the Mission's ability to implement its mandate.

V. Observations

56. The scale of renewed violence in Iraq during the reporting period is alarming. I again urge political leaders from all sides to intensify their efforts to resolve the continuing political stalemate in accordance with the Constitution, through serious dialogue and with a spirit of compromise, so that no space is left to those who seek to exploit the situation through violence and terror. In this regard, I welcome recent Iraqi-led dialogue initiatives. I also welcome the agreement reached between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, which should be implemented swiftly. UNAMI stands ready to assist all parties in moving ahead towards national reconciliation.

57. I condemn the violence that occurred during the Hawija incident on 23 April and call upon the Government to complete an independent and transparent investigation without further delay. I reiterate my appeals to the security forces to exert maximum restraint in maintaining law and order and to demonstrators to remain peaceful in exercising their legitimate freedoms of assembly and expression. All the representatives of the demonstrators should ensure that none of their followers inflame sectarian tensions. Above all, it is vital that the representatives of both the Government and the demonstrators initiate serious dialogue to address all outstanding issues. I reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to facilitating such dialogue. I also call upon members of the international community to use their influence to create an enabling environment for the parties concerned to reach an agreement.

58. I take note of the political and legislative concerns expressed by the demonstrators, in particular those pertaining to amendments to the Accountability and Justice Law and the Anti-Terrorism Law and the enactment of the General Amnesty Law. I hope that those demands are taken into consideration by the relevant State institutions and are resolved by consensus. I urge all political leaders and parliamentarians to redouble their efforts to expedite the legislative processes.

59. I also commend the Independent High Electoral Commission for the organization and supervision of successful governorate council elections on 20 April and 20 June. The relative calm in which the elections were held throughout the 14 governorates and the professional coordination of electoral operations demonstrate the ability of Iraq to engage in free and fair democratic processes. I should like to take this opportunity to encourage the organization of free and fair elections in the Kurdistan Region, currently scheduled for 21 September. The United Nations stands ready to continue to support the Independent High Electoral Commission. I should also like to urge all parties concerned to agree on holding the elections in the Kirkuk Governorate and in the three governorates of the Kurdistan Region, whose citizens have been deprived of the right to choose their local representatives for too long.

60. I commend the statesmanship of the leaders of Iraq and Kuwait for the remarkable progress achieved towards the full normalization of relations between the two countries, including the visit of the Prime Minister of Kuwait to Baghdad on 12 June. Iraq has made great strides towards restoring the international standing that it held before 1990. I welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), by which the Council entrusted the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property to UNAMI under Chapter VI of the

Charter. I hope that the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait will now work hand in hand to increase cooperation in all areas for the benefit of their people.

61. I reiterate my previous call upon the Government to implement the necessary legal, institutional and policy reforms with regard to the administration of prisons and places of detention to ensure adherence to the rule of law. I also urge the Iraqi institutions to implement the necessary legal reforms to ensure that the pretrial detention process is carried out in a manner that is reasonable and lawful, in accordance with international standards. All claims of torture or abuse to induce confessions should be investigated by an independent judicial authority and, where evidence verifies such claims, those responsible should be held accountable under the law.

62. I am concerned that Iraq continues to implement the death penalty, the prevailing flaws in its criminal justice system notwithstanding. I regret that my frequent appeals for a moratorium in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions remain unheeded. I take this opportunity to call upon the Government to halt all executions, conduct an independent review of all death row cases and disclose information on the number and identity of death row prisoners, the charges and judicial proceedings brought against them and the outcome of these reviews.

63. It is becoming increasingly clear that the events in the region cannot be separated. I continue to note with much concern the impact of the tragic conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on neighbouring countries, including Iraq. The sectarian aspects of the Syrian conflict are now affecting the region adversely. The Syrian conflict has affected Iraq not only in terms of the number of refugees that the country has welcomed, but also in terms of its security and political stability. I appreciate the recent decision taken by the Government of Iraq to allocate $10 million to assist Syrian refugees in Iraq. I also call upon the Government to grant Syrian refugees in the Al-Qaim camp residence permits and/or freedom of movement, similar to the Syrian refugees seeking asylum in the Kurdistan Region, and to create enabling conditions for their self-reliance and possible integration into local communities. While bearing in mind its security concerns, I urge the Government of Iraq to keep its borders open for Syrians seeking refuge.

64. I condemn the attack on Camp Hurriya of 15 June and should like to reiterate my call upon the Government to ensure the safety and security of all residents. I should also like to restate the commitment of the United Nations to finding a peaceful and durable solution for all residents. In this regard, I commend the Governments that have agreed to admit residents into their territories and reiterate my call upon other Member States to follow suit. As UNHCR continues to dedicate significant human and financial resources to implementing solutions for the residents of the camp, I urge the residents to fully cooperate with UNHCR, resume attending interviews and seize immediately and without exception resettlement opportunities that are offered to them outside Iraq. I also note with great concern numerous reports of human rights abuses inside the camp. The restrictions on residents' access to communication, including the Internet and cellular phones, access to medical services and restrictions on their ability to leave the camp, are unacceptable and must cease immediately. Lastly, I urge all parties concerned to peacefully settle, as swiftly as possible, outstanding issues relating to the closure of Camp New Iraq and the relocation of the remaining residents.

65. Over the past few months, my Special Representative has pursued several tracks to promote regional and bilateral cooperation to find specific solutions to the key environmental issue of sandstorms and dust storms. Combating sandstorms and dust storms requires the efforts of all affected countries in the region. I commend in this regard the high-level initiative of the Prime Minister to set up a national commission to combat sandstorms and dust storms in Iraq and to facilitate regional cooperation. The United Nations in Iraq, including through the regional programme of the United Nations Environment Programme, will pursue its efforts to support and promote initiatives to combat sandstorms and dust storms at the ministerial level in partnerships with private-sector entities.

66. As underscored in my previous report, the continued absence of a status-of-mission agreement hampers the ability of UNAMI and the United Nations country team to undertake mandated activities in support of the Government and people of Iraq and raises questions negatively affecting the ability of the Organization to continue to operate with the necessary security and legal umbrella. I therefore appeal once again to the Government to take all practical measures to ensure that the status-of-mission agreement is finalized in accordance with United Nations standards and brought into force without further delay.

67. Lastly, I should like to express my sincere gratitude to my Special Representative, Martin Kobler, who will complete his tenure on 22 July, for his tireless efforts and dynamic leadership in implementing the mandate entrusted to UNAMI by the Security Council and advancing the objectives of the United Nations in support of the people and Government of Iraq. I also thank the UNAMI national and international staff, in addition to the personnel of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, for their continued dedicated commitment under extremely challenging conditions.